

America's veterans have served our nation with great honor and courage. It is only right for the nation to repay their sacrifices by providing them with appropriate benefits and access to the best possible medical care. Since 2001, Congress has boosted funding for veterans' health care by more than 50%, allowed "concurrent receipt" of retirement pay and disability benefits for severely disabled veterans, and expanded the TRICARE program to cover military retirees over the age of 65. Although there has been a great deal of progress, more remains to be done. In particular, we must ensure that we provide sufficient care for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, the signature conditions of the current Global War on Terror.

One of my top priorities in Congress has been to provide additional services for veterans in the North State. Historically, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has not had a large presence in rural areas like ours. Over the past 20 years, the VA outpatient clinic in Redding has expanded from 15 to over 100 staff and added a number of new services, while the Chico clinic has also enlarged significantly since its opening in 1997. I have also worked to secure the first veterans cemetery in the North State, which was dedicated on Veterans Day 2005, and a veterans extended-care home in Redding, scheduled to begin construction later in 2010.

[[go back to "On the Issues" main page](#)]